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11 March 1975

MEMORANDUM FOR: Chief, Product Review Division

SUBJECT: MPRRD Comments on the RONI

REFERENCE: Memo to 24 February

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1. I'd like to preface my comments you requested on memo and also put them into a little better perspective by first offering a few admittedly digressive thoughts on what I feel are some of the conceptual weaknesses in the KIQ/KEP mechanism.

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2. In spite of its defects, DCID 1/2, U.S. Foreign Intelligence Priorities--which should be hitting the streets any day in its third revision--is still the basic and only comprehensive statement of long-term substantive guidance to assist national-level program managers in planning and allocating their resources. But while DCID 1/2 assigns priorities to all countries and topics of information, it is intended only to reflect the relative importance of those countries and topics to U.S. needs and is in no way concerned with how much or how little information on that subject may already exist. KIQs, on the other hand, are focused on those topics of major importance during the current fiscal year about which we need to know more and on which the community is being asked to emphasize its collection and reporting efforts in the near-term period. In effect, they are statements of our highest priority intelligence gaps.

3. The reason for this rather protracted analysis of the two documents is simply to make the point that since all KIQs are by definition of equal "major (high priority) importance" some further definitive priority guidance is needed or will be sought and the only place where it can currently be found is in DCID 1/2. But even assuming that the KIQs are all of "highest" priority, the DCI states in his introduction to the KIQs that they do not address all of the high priority topics--only those on which the community feels the gaps are most critical. The majority of information pumped out by the system will still be in response to other standing requirements--national, departmental, or tactical--that are not included in the KIQs. This is not meant to downgrade the importance of the KIQs or to suggest that they, in conjunction with the KEP, are not a useful tool in refining the collection and production process. My point simply is that the community seems to have developed what amounts to a KIQ obsession--one which clearly implies that if a product is KIQ-related, it's important (and will ultimately figure in the basis on which the Community's report cards will be graded and resources allocated or reallocated)

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and if it's not it doesn't warrant much attention, at least not at the higher levels where resource considerations are foremost. Therefore, it might be worthwhile to consider putting a statement in the next edition of the RONI to the effect that while we may highlight the KIQs in our statistics for evaluation purposes, we nevertheless recognize that the great bulk of intelligence is produced against non-KIQ requirements.

4. Now to address several of the specific points in [] memo: It's understandable that the NIOs and those involved in the KEP would be seeking a more precise means for tying KIQ responsiveness to specific intelligence sources since this will be the major factor in determining resource adjustments in the next fiscal year KIQ cycle. For practical as well as philosophical reasons, however, I have serious misgivings about ours (or anyone's ability, for that matter) to state with any reliable degree of accuracy the extent to which a particular source (unless it happens to be the sole source which is infrequent) may have contributed to a particular article in the NIB or NID. In the winnowing and synthesizing of products from multiple sources to prepare the NIB and NID articles, I believe it would be extremely difficult even for the reporters to make this judgment. It is even more difficult, in my view, to make a value judgment on what part of an article from a particular source is "significant," what part is "peripheral," and so on. On this latter point, while I've been here only a short time, I'm personally experiencing some problems in judging the utility or importance of a particular article to its audience. Some general observations/questions:

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--Who's the principal user of the product? In the case of the NID, surely he is at the highest policy/decision-making level of the government. And although it may be our job as reviewers to do so, how does one accurately and confidently gauge its usefulness to him? Is it a piece of vital, unique, timely information which he wants and can put to direct use? Or is it nice-to-know, interesting perhaps, but only serves to supplement or reinforce what information he already has available to him.

--I also question the "KIQ Relationship" adjective "significant" for much the same reason. I think it would be more appropriate to apply the word "direct" (which I note that [] uses on his evaluation sheets) because it is more parallel to the other term "peripheral." "Significant," it seems to me, is a judgment that hinges not only on how much of the KIQ a particular article may respond to but also how unique it may be in furnishing what information has heretofore been missing in our (the user's) knowledge of the situation or topic.

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--Other factors not taken into account can also affect the responsiveness of a given source to a KIQ. Is the KIQ broadly stated so that it would tend to attract a larger number of responses or very specific and therefore elicit few responses or perhaps none at all. Is a given

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source's poor responsiveness to a KIQ the result of an inherent inability of that source to provide information on that subject or is it due merely to a lack of resources devoted to the question because of the competing demands placed on the source by other questions?

25X1 5. I apologize for burdening you with this lengthy and largely philosophical discourse. I realize that as a newcomer I'm probably plowing a great deal of old ground where you and the staff are concerned. However, [] memo did raise some troublesome questions in my mind and with your request for comments I thought I would take the opportunity to surface my views.

25X1 6. Addressing [] "additional points":

a. "Account for all published articles."

Tend to agree that RONI statistics may be misleading if they do not account for all NIB, NID, DIN articles. But a prefatory statement in the introduction could inform the reader that only those articles falling under an NIO responsibility have been accounted for.

b. "Accommodate double counting."

If by this is meant that an article should in all cases be credited against only one KIQ in an area or topic, I disagree. It's obvious that a given article could respond to several areas/topics and this point, too, should perhaps be stressed in our opening statement. Doing it this way undoubtedly complicates the KEP cost-out process but logically I believe there is no other choice.

c. "Standardize (that is, a more detailed specification of sources) sources."

Again, this is obviously desirable from a KEP viewpoint but without more specific source attribution in the NIB and NID, this would be impossible.

d. "Assess the real need for daily review of production."

Believe daily, continuing review is essential if the goal of "improved product" is ever to be realized.

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Dr. Lapham called + was trivially complimentary re
the CONT. He is looking forward to bigger + better
things for this publication.

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